

S-E-C-R-E-T

19 June 1964

STAFF NOTE

SUBJECT: Brazil: The Passing of 14 June

In view of Ambassador Gordon's visit here next Monday, and of our (and his) difference of opinion with INR over Brazilian prospects, we set forth the following comments on recent and prospective political developments in Brazil.

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President Castello Branco's supervision of the purges conducted under the Institutional Act gives evidence of his determination to protect the vital interests of the April revolution, but also of his ability to resist and moderate hard line military pressures. With the passing of the 14 June deadline for summary purges, national attention will probably now be focused on social and economic problems. We would expect a decline in military intervention in government and the assumption of a more forceful role by civilian moderates. In our view the only issue likely to weaken Castello Branco's control over the hardliners would be the manifest failures of the regime's social and economic programs.

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1. During the final week before the 14 June deadline for summary purges under the Institutional Act in Brazil, some 150 individuals were added to the lists of those deprived of their political rights for 10 years, thereby raising the total of those put under the ban since the overthrow of the Goulart regime to about 400*. Those affected were also ousted from whatever elective or appointive office they held, or if in the military, they were retired from active duty. The ranks of the purged now include three former Presidents (Goulart, Quadros, and Kubitschek), ~~SIX~~ state governors (out of 22), and some 50 congressmen (of a total membership of 500). The official charges against those purged were not made public. In most cases, leftist subversion and/or corruption in office probably were the dominant factors. Partisan maneuvering at times was also involved, however, and political ~~thieves~~ in good standing with the revolution generally were spared

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* The Institutional Act was grafted onto the Brazilian Constitution by the military Supreme Revolutionary Command as a condition for return to civilian rule. Summary purges were provided for first under the authority of the Command and then by the new President for 60 days after his inauguration. The exact number of those purged is in dispute. Some tallies apparently include military officers involuntarily retired but not stripped of their political rights. These are not included in our tally.

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2. Ex-President Kubitschek (1956-61) was the most notable and controversial figure placed on the final lists. Kubitschek had many friends: he was the leader of Brazil's largest political party, was widely popular in Brazil, and enjoyed a very favorable reputation abroad. His enemies also were many. His refusal to join the movement against Goulart and his abortive attempt to gain control of the new regime once the revolution proved successful intensified the feelings against him among military and political supporters of the revolution. To these groups Kubitschek, along with Goulart, was responsible for the political corruption and the collaboration with leftist extremists which had nearly caused the collapse of Brazilian "democracy."



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theless, the decisive factor for Castello Branco, and for all revolutionary leaders, was the threat to the survival of the revolution posed by Kubitschek's candidacy in the 1965 presidential race. Castello Branco probably would have preferred to remove this threat indirectly via electoral "reform," but

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a large part of the military establishment demanded direct action against Kubitschek. Castello Branco probably concluded that the issue of when and how to move against Kubitschek was not worth the risk of a serious split in the ranks of the supporters of the revolution.

4. Castello Branco, however, did use his influence to keep the purges within reasonable bounds generally. He refused to delegate his authority to approve summary purges to regional military commanders. He resisted strong military and conservative pressures to extend the purge period beyond the 14 June deadline in order to permit investigations of additional suspects. His insistence on the presentation of convincing evidence to back up all charges kept down the number of those placed under the ban for reasons of personal or partisan reprisal. Most significantly, none of the moderate pro-revolutionary governors who came under attack by local conservatives and military commanders were removed from office. In the key case of Mauro Borges of Goias, the governor won a moral victory over his conservative persecutors: he retained his office; only a token number of his assistants were purged; and the leader of the partisan attack against

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him also was purged. Also notably absent from the purge lists, probably on the basis of a veto by the President, were several of Goulart's cabinet ministers (e.g., San Thiago Dantas) and the two members he appointed to the Supreme Court who were widely accused by revolutionary leaders of aiding his subversive conspiracy.

5. On the basis of Castello Branco's supervision of the purges, and of his general performance since taking office, ☐

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☐ he will probably provide reasonably effective political leadership along moderate reformist lines and ☐ with some concessions to expediency he probably will succeed in maintaining general control of the situation. He has shown a determination to protect the vital interests of the revolution, but also an ability to resist and moderate hard line military pressures.

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6. The passing of the 14 June deadline for summary purges will probably strengthen Castello Branco's position, at least temporarily. We would now expect a shifting of national attention to the economic and social problems inherited by the new regime and its programs for relieving them. With this shift in

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emphasis we would expect a decline in military intervention in government, especially at the State and municipal levels, where local military commanders have in many instances been "co-ruling" with elective officials apprehensive about a possible loss of their mandates. Also, moderates in Congress, no longer in fear of being purged, are likely to adopt a more forceful role in supporting Castello Branco against hard line or ultra-conservative pressures. The purges probably have not seriously weakened Castello Branco's prestige and authority among political moderates, including those in Kubitschek's Social Democratic Party.

7. We believe, moreover, that Castello Branco continues to command a position of pre-eminence among Brazilian military officers. So far, no hard line leader has made much apparent progress in challenging this position. It would probably take a substantial blow to Castello Branco's prestige to undermine his control and cause the regime to "slip into increasing authoritarianism." In our view the only issue likely to precipitate such a blow would be the manifest failure of his social and economic reform programs. The new regime has made a reasonably promising beginning on the social and economic fronts. Continued progress will depend in good part on substantial US assistance.

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